

APR 6 1964

NEWSWEEK

Fulbright's 'Unthinkable Thoughts'

*Excerpts from the senator's
speech on U.S. foreign policy:*

“We are confronted with a complex and fluid world situation and we are not adapting ourselves to it. We are clinging to old myths in the face of new realities and we are seeking to escape the contradictions by narrowing the permissible bonds of public discussion, by relegating an increasing number of ideas and viewpoints to a growing category of ‘unthinkable thoughts.’”

“The master myth of the cold war is that the Communist bloc is a monolith composed of governments which are not really governments at all but organized conspiracies, divided among themselves perhaps in certain matters of tactics, but all equally resolute and implacable in their determination to destroy the free world ... The reality is that some Communist regimes pose a threat to the free world while others pose little or none, and that if we will recognize these distinctions, we ourselves will be able to influence events in the Communist bloc in a way favorable to the security of the free world.”

“We can acknowledge the fact that the Soviet Union, though still a most formidable adversary, has ceased to be totally and implacably hostile to the West. It has shown a new willingness to enter mutually advantageous arrangements with the West and, thus far at least, to honor them. It has therefore become possible to divert some of our energies from the prosecution of the cold war to the relaxation of the cold war and to deal with the Soviet Union, for certain purposes, as a normal state with normal and traditional interests.”

“A modest increase in East-West trade may ... serve as a modest instrument of East-West détente—provided that we are able to overcome the myth that trade with Communist countries is a compact with the devil and to recognize that, on the contrary, trade can serve as an effective and honorable means of advancing both peace and human welfare.”

notion that the issue with Panama is a test of our courage and resolve ... I am unable to understand how a controversy with a small and poor country, with virtually no military capacity, can possibly be regarded as a test of our bravery and will to defend our interests. It takes stubbornness but not courage to reject the entreaties of the weak. The real test in Panama is not of our valor but of our wisdom and judgment and common sense.”

“I think that we must abandon the myth that Cuban Communism is a transitory menace that is going to collapse or disappear in the immediate future and face up to two basic realities about Cuba: first, that the Castro regime is not on the verge of collapse and is not likely to be overthrown by any policies which we are now pursuing or can reasonably undertake; and second, that the continued existence of the Castro regime, though inimical to our interests and policies, is not an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of our objectives, unless we make it so by permitting it to poison our politics at home and to divert us from more important tasks in the hemisphere.”

“I do not think that the United States can, or should, recognize Communist China, or acquiesce in its admission to the United Nations under present circumstances ... I do not believe, however, that this state of affairs is necessarily permanent ... We would do well ... to maintain an ‘open door’ to the possibility of improved relations with Communist China in the future. For a start, we must jar open our minds to certain realities about China, of which the foremost is that there really are not ‘two Chinas,’ but only one—mainland China; and that it is ruled by Communists, and is likely to remain so for the indefinite future.”

“An effective foreign policy is one which concerns itself more with innovation abroad than with conciliation at home ... It is sometimes necessary for leaders to do unpleasant and unpopular things ... We must dare to think about ‘unthinkable things,’ because when things become ‘unthinkable,’ thinking stops and action becomes immediate.”